

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 500

By Tracy

A RESOLUTION to create a special joint committee to study providing state services to survivors of traumatic brain injuries.

WHEREAS, more than six million people suffer strokes in the United States each year, sometimes resulting in traumatic brain injury. Many others suffer traumatic brain injuries through blunt force trauma, shootings, actions of war, auto accidents, or injuries on the athletic field. Every nineteen seconds, one person in the U.S. suffers a traumatic brain injury; and

WHEREAS, traumatic brain injury survivors find it extremely difficult to rebuild their lives after their event due to the public's decided lack of knowledge about how much survivors are capable of achieving. Many become convinced by family or friends that they need government assistance to survive and continual care from either an assisted living facility or full-time caregiver; and

WHEREAS, while many survivors may not be able to do all they could before their injury, they can, with proper training and accommodation, become fully capable of taking care of themselves and enjoy a meaningful and fulfilling life again; and

WHEREAS, unfortunately, few opportunities exist for survivors to receive needed training; little education is available for friends and family to learn how to assist and encourage survivors to rebuild their lives, and almost no encouragement is given for businesses and industries to hire survivors, which contributes greatly to their need for government assistance; and

WHEREAS, although the current recession has led to significant cuts in revenue and federal funding, states must continue to provide assistance to the disabled; traumatic brain injury survivors could help ease the burden on government and governmental assistance by becoming more self-sufficient if given the chance; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED SEVENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that there is hereby created a special joint committee to study services provided to traumatic brain injury survivors in Tennessee.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that such study shall determine: (1) what efforts the State of Tennessee can undertake to help survivors receive the physical and mental therapy they need to increase their confidence, pride, and dignity; (2) what efforts the State of Tennessee can initiate to help survivors continue their careers; (3) what efforts the State of Tennessee can provide to decrease the need survivors have for government assistance; (4) steps the State of Tennessee can take to educate families about their ability to encourage survivors to reach their highest potential; and (5) steps the State of Tennessee can take to educate and encourage businesses that survivors, with proper accommodation, are capable of contributing to their success.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this study should: (1) provide the State of Tennessee with numerous opportunities to help traumatic brain injury survivors become more self-sufficient and less dependent on government assistance; (2) provide Tennessee's business community with more employment options and more opportunities for tax breaks for hiring disabled citizens; (3) determine what cost Tennessee would incur from providing these services; and (4) put Tennessee at the forefront of treatment for survivors of traumatic brain injuries.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the committee shall consist of three (3) members of the House of Representatives and three (3) members of the Senate, to be appointed by the respective speakers.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that all appropriate state agencies shall provide assistance to the special joint committee upon request of the chair.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that all legislative members of the special joint committee who are duly elected members of the General Assembly shall remain members of such committee until the committee reports its findings and recommendations to the General Assembly.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the special joint committee shall be convened by the member with the most years of continuous service in the General Assembly, and at its first meeting shall elect a chair, vice-chair, and such other officers the committee deems necessary.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the special committee shall timely report its findings and recommendations, including any proposed legislation, to the One Hundred Eighth General Assembly no later than February 1, 2013, at which time the committee shall cease to exist.